

**Pre-Council**  
**Monday, December 19th @ 10:30 a.m.**  
**Curb Cuts & Driveway Locations**

Attendees: Jonathan Cook, Patte Newman, Jon Camp, Ken Svoboda, Robin Eschliman, Annette McRoy, Randy Hoskins, Marc Rosso, Marc Wullschleger, Tina Queen.

**Svoboda** opened the meeting. The meeting was requested by Jon Camp.

**Camp** asked for this meeting because businesses have expressed concern about the closure of curb cuts, streets, etc. He is concerned with how this will impact the conduct of those businesses.

**Hoskins** stated that at the start of a project, we look at what is existing and how we can make the project both safe and efficient for moving traffic and look at the driveways that are along that street. We are fully aware of the impacts that closing a driveway has on a business but we are also well aware of the impacts that a driveway has on being able to move traffic safely and efficiently along the corridor. Interstates are the safest highways in the world because there are no breaks in traffic.

If you travel westbound on South Street, there is a flasher up that tells you if someone is approaching that intersection. I can't say that is an acceptable way to handle traffic at a blind intersection.

When looking at a driveway closure, if a business only has one access, it's very rare that we would close that. At 48th and O we went in and bought two properties because we had to close their only access or all of their accesses because it was too near to a major intersection. We had proposed a safety project a couple years back where we would go in and put in a westbound right turn lane at that intersection. When we went to the State to get safety funding for that project, they denied it because they felt it was unsafe. We would have had driveways within a right turn lane. It was a result of that when we went in and bought out a couple businesses so we could put that right turn lane in to make it safe and not have conflict with driveways.

Along 48th Street and R Street, we are doing some widening of the street that was cutting down some distances between driveways and the intersection. We're still not getting the 200' separation of accesses that is standard in the City's driveway policy, but if we can incrementally look to improve things each time we go out to an area, I think ultimately we end up with a much better project.

**Newman** stated that there is a difference between a business that is a Star Bucks driveway and a business that is not going to generate a lot of traffic. Is there any way that the existing business that has been there for 30-40 years can keep what they have. If the property changes hands down the road that could possibly generate more traffic, we could change it then. We all understand that you are looking strictly from a safety aspect but we need to look at this from a business aspect as well.

**Hoskins** stated that it is very important they have easy in and out access for a pass-by type of

business such as a gas station or fast food restaurant. The difference needs to be made between a fast food or convenience store versus a different sort of retail where it's not an impulse buy. We have some more instances along 48th Street and South Street where we have some driveways we feel are just too close to an intersection.

**Svoboda** stated that when you're talking about a destination shopping point, if someone goes to that destination one time and has difficulty getting into that location, the next time they will think twice.

**Eschliman** asked about how many crashes and fatalities we've had at 48th and R and do we have some state funding that is at jeopardy if we leave this alone.

**Hoskins** stated that a number of crashes have occurred between O and R on 48th Street not counting those that occurred at the intersections of O and R. In the past three years, there have been over 80 crashes in that stretch of street which is the highest in the City. We will be closing one of the Target driveways because of the crash problems that we've experienced and the backups we have along 48th Street. We are proposing to put in a traffic signal. We will close both of the Target driveways and move them a little further south and signalize that intersection roughly midway between O and R. It's not a great solution from my point of view because adding more signals in a short spacing like that means that people on 48th Street will be inconvenienced. With the number of crashes we've had, we felt that it was necessary. I don't believe we have any federal funds on this project.

**Camp** stated that one of the reasons he asked for this pre-council is to address the velocity of what we're doing. Public Works is favoring big boxes over the small merchants and I find it ironic that we've got the current Walmart issue versus the home town business. While I favor free market enterprise, this is an area where we can very easily help those established small town businesses that have been here since day one and have contributed to our economy. Target and Super Saver has hundreds of parking spaces. Armstrong has 20.

**Hoskins** replied that he would disagree with the fact that we are promoting the big boxes over the small businesses. One of the things we look at is "do these businesses have reasonable access now?"

**Camp** stated that cranking the numbers and running them out doesn't always equate to a business mode or practice.

**Hoskins** asked if want to have to widen streets so that we can move the traffic we need to or should we try and do what we can to make these streets as efficient as possible. Maybe that means combining some accesses or lengthening the distance between accesses. I don't think were making any of these businesses unviable by what we're proposing.

**Camp** disagreed. These two particular situations at 48th and R and 14th Street would have occurred without any Council involvement had we not brought this up to you. Is that correct?

**Hoskins** replied that he would be correct.

**Marvin** stated that it would be cheaper and less disruptive to the existing business if you change things after the business changes hands. I think it needs to be clear that when you talk about traffic risk, you are talking about it from an engineering standpoint. I know that at 14th Street the number of accidents that have occurred there is small if any over the last five years.

**Hoskins** stated that this is taken very seriously. We are the ones that see these crash reports and go out to these fatal crashes. In some cases like 14th Street, we haven't had a lot of crashes there, but we always get people asking us "how many fatalities does it take before you come out and do this or put in this signal, etc?" We always get ridiculed for not being pro-active and then when we are, we still get ridiculed.

**Cook** asked if you take away one access, do you have to compensate the business owner or do you only have to compensate when you eliminate access entirely.

**Hoskins** replied that it is situational.

**Cook** asked if that will be determined as part of the project.

**Hoskins** replied that there is some right-of-way negotiations going on.

**Cook** asked if we could enter into some sort of agreement with the property owner to take access at some future date should the use change.

**Hoskins** replied that the difficulty in doing that is we would need to have a binding agreement with that property owner. This probably could be handled through the right-of-way negotiations but then I couldn't guarantee you that we're going to pay for that now when we're trying to get them to sign that agreement.

**Cook** stated that it might be appropriate to pay something to them as compensation for the future loss when they sell the business. I would like to see if it's legal and what kind of arrangement we can make with Armstrong. Regarding 14th Street, I know that you did bring out some alternative to that which was a right-in only. There has still been some concern about that from some of the business owners. One issue is parking. As I understand it, there is a concern putting a number of parking stalls along the street because of people turning in and the right-in would slow down traffic. Why did earlier versions have some parking and the current version is missing parking for that first block?

**Hoskins** replied that there were some concerns with parking right up to the corner and people backing out of those stalls. Anybody looking to turn in there would not be expecting someone to be backing out into their path. It was possible to leave some parking in there but it had to be moved away from the corner. It worked well with the overall intention to provide a beautification area. We

have done some other things in that area to provide more parking and to address some of the concerns of the merchants. One of things we do is have a public involvement process so people do know what is coming. We work with them to come up with something that we can both live with as far as safety. It may not be the ultimate solution for them, but it's better.

**Svoboda** stated that since you are realigning South Street, it appears that the northern curb cut on South Street at 14th Street is going to be 15' closer than what it is right now which would reduce the blindness of that intersection. If we move that intersection out further, wouldn't we be compensating there but allowing a right in, right out?

**Hoskins** replied that it does improve the situation, but does not alleviate it.

**Svoboda** stated that we're trying to compensate for the shortness between 13th and 14th. How does a process like this get started?

**Wullschleger** replied that Urban Development works with the neighborhood. There wasn't much of a neighborhood when we started, but now there is because we brought this process forward. We've been working on this 2-3 years and have added some of the neighborhood associations to that. We think we have good input from the businesses and from the neighborhood association.

**Marvin** stated that compromising is a step in the right direction and that maybe we can work with the businesses to try and maintain some angle parking. It is a classic effort of trying to clear up blight.

**Camp** stated that we need to look at older areas and know that they may need some special consideration.